[English]

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : He has raised a very important issue. I also intended to raise that issue but being Friday, I did not raise it. I propose that there should be a Government Resolution on Monday to protest against this behaviour of the American Government. I request the Government to accept this proposal. This is an affront against the Parliament of our country. Therefore, we should have an official Resolution in the House.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : The Minister should make a statement on this.

[Translation]

SHRI HARADHAN ROY (Asansol) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, prior to the nationalisation of coal mines in my constituency, a notice was served by D.G.M.S. that the 22 mauja which was an area of substantial fire is dangerous and hence it should be evacuated. By 1994, the said area was gradually extended and area of 39 mauja was declared to be dengerous. Right now area of approximately 70 mauja is being deemed dangerous and the residents are being asked to evacuate the area. Except approximately 70 squre kilometer area, all the villages are facing the danger. The Government was reminded time and again that the agreement signed with the Government of West Bengal in 1990 is not being abided by and the residents are not being rehabilitated. Their source of employment and crops are reuined and their lives are in danger. My submission is that on one hand, the Government is not abiding by the agreement and on the other hand, it is closing down the nine and proposes to import coal from foreign countries. Even when coal is available in abundent measure; we are resorting to import of coal. Coal is being burnt causing heavy losses to the nation. I would urge upon the Central Government to pay attention to this matter and abide by the agreement reached with the Coal India. The mines closed down earlier should be re-opened for mining.

Besides, the Government should make arrangements to provide employment and rehabilitation of the affected persons from the protected area.

SHRI NIHAL CHAND CHAUHAN (Sri Ganganagar) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, through you. I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards the problem of those farmers who live near the Indo-Pak border. The border area was fenced with barbed wires about ten years ago during Shri Rajiv Gandhi's regime. An area of one to two acres of land belonging to farmers was acquired for this purpose. But so far no compensation has been paid to them. These farmers are not allowed to cultivate on this land or do anything on it. I request the Government that either these farmers should be given compensation or allot land at some other alternative place.

[English]

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Sir, I would like to bring to the notice of this Government a very grave issue regarding farmers who are growing rubber. I have given notices on two issues.

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You have to take up the first item only.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Sir, I have given notices on both the issues.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You can take up only one issue.

[English]

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Sir, there are two issues. The farmers' issue is very grave. It is because the price of natural rubber has gone down.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Then you raise farmers' issue only.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Last year, the price of natural rubber was Rs. 55 per kg. Now, it has crashed down to Rs. 38 per kg. The farmers who are growing rubber are earning a lot for the country, and the country is also saving a lot. There are seven or eight lakhs of small and marignal farmers who are growing rubber. They are, now, put under great stress. Nobody is coming forward to safeguard them. No Government has come forward to safeguard them. In fact, this issue was taken up in Parliament by way of a Calling Attention Motion. We got a reply that something would be done immediately. An assurance was given that assistance would be given to the tune of Rs. 100 crore for procuring some rubber. Unless some rubber is procured at this stage, there is no way through which these seven or eight lakh farmers can be saved.

The economy of India largely depends, especially, on this type of agriculture, Rubber is an item which is used very extensively everywhere. The raw material is being supplied by the small farmers to the whole world. But when they are in distress, there is nobody is help them. We seek the indulgence of this House as well as of this Government to give, at least, Rs. 100 crore for them. If the Central Government is ready to give them Rs. 100 crore for the procurement of rubber, I do not know whether the State Government is interested in it. It is unfortunate. Earlier we used to say 'fortunate' but now we would say, it is 'unfortunate'.

The major chunk, that is, 90 per cent of the rubber

is grown in my State. We have a Government there. They are not at all responsive to this. They are interested in pampering the liquor lobby. They are not interested in the farmers now. They have not taken any steps. Sir, in this House, a reply was given that if the State Government comes forward, they would help them. The State Government have not come forward even to seek the help of the Centre. So, it is for this House to help the rubber growers. I am sure this grave issue will be shared by all the farmers. Sir, if Rs. 100 crore is given and if some rubber is procured, that will boost the price of rubber.

If that is not done, the whole farming community will suffer and that will cause a great loss to the excehquer of India. I think, Sir, you must give some directions to the Government. The Government of India's policies are also to be changed a little.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please take your seat now.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Sir, we have put forward some suggestions with regard to changes, so I once again urge upon you to kindly give some directions to the Government because of the problems faced by the farmers and also of the workers who go around these rubber trees in the morning at 4 a.m., they get the rubber and they bring the yield. I plead with you that this is an issue of human rights, this is an issue of farmers and this is an issue of small growers as well as workers, that you must give some directions to the Government so that the Government takes some action in this regard.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA (Kottayam) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I also join Shri Thomas on the very issue of decline in prices of rubber. We are raising this issue and making demand here in this House time and again that problems of rubber grower should be removed. Minister of Commerce has given assurance that rubber would be procured by the Government and a sum of rupees 100 crore were earmarked for this purpose. The State Government is also not paying attention towards rubber growers and at present only Rs. 35 are being paid for a kg. rubber. The Government should make arrangements to provide funds and to appoint an agency like S.T.C. or any other corporation for procuring and marketing of rubber so that they can help the farmers...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAM NAIK : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, about 400 or 500 Indian people have been killed in the fire accident in Saudi Arabia on 15th of April, who had gone there to perform Haj....*(Interruptions)*

[English]

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (Mavelikara) : Sir, I would like to bring to your notice the assurance given by the Commerce Minister during a Calling Attention Motion that he would direct the STC to procure rubber. The assurance was given by the Government, by the Commerce Minister last month, but nothing has happened so far.

I would only like to bring to your kind notice this issue of rubber growers and would urge upon you to instruct the Government to fulfil the assurance given by it. That is all and what I am requesting you is that for the sake of poor farmers please instruct the Government to fulfil its commitment.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT (Dausa) : Sir, it is a fact that it was assured by the Government...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I have no list of members who had given notices. In spite of it how many members can be allowed. It is zero Hour and I am not stopping anyone.

(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : Sir, you can ask the Government to come with a reply...*(Interruptions)* The hon. Leader of the House is here, he can give an assurance for the sake if farmers of Kerala...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Alright, please take your seat.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Now please listen to his point.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Why do you not listen to him?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : The action should have been taken if an assurance was given to this effect. We will take action if no action has been taken so far in this regard...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Please call a meeting of the farmers...*(Interruptions)*